

A
SERMON
PREACHED
IN THE
Cathedral Church
OF
DURHAM,
UPON

The Revival of the Ancient Laudable Practice of that, and some other Cathedrals, in having Sermons on *Wednesdays* and *Fridays*, During *ADVENT* and *LENT*.

By D. G. D. D. D.

By Denis Grenville, Dean of Durham
LONDON:

Printed for John Cloud, at the Press in St. Pauls Church-Yard. MDCLXXXVI

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To the Right Reverend Father in God, the Right Honourable NATHANAEL Lord Bishop of DURHAM, and Clerk of the Closet to His Majesty.

MY LORD,

YOU were pleas'd in your Visitation of our Cathedral Church this last Summer, to recommend to my Self and Brethren, the revival of an Ancient Religious Custom of Sermons on Wednesdays and Fridays in Advent and Lent.

With which Pious Motion we have not only readily complied, but laid out our endeavours to prepare the People of this City to concur, that we might be secured of a Congregation, and that this Undertaking might be performed in the best *Decorum* and most to Edification. Which having proved, God be thanked, very successful, I thought my self oblig'd in this most publick manner to give the World an Account of it, that other Diocesses, as they need not disdain in other things to follow the Example of *Durham*, so they might in this be encouraged by our happy success to imitate that Godly Practice, for the Precedent of which they owe very much to your Lordship.

The Magistrates, and People of best Quality in this City, do by their Presence intimate how much they are gratified that their Cathedral should first restore this Religious Course, which was in use here in the memory of some of our Body, and has been at *Tork* ever since the return of the Monarchy, and we have reason to believe has been observed in most if not all Cathedrals, before the Great Rebellion.

And whatsoever measures Cathedrals and Churches in remote parts may now take upon so seasonable and considerable an Instance, there are just grounds of believing that some great Churches in this Country, where Afternoon and Week-day Lectures have been usual, will change

The Epistle Dedicatory.

them by this regular practice, into a *course of Advent and Lent, and Festival Sermons*. I hear already of one very noted Corporation, which upon the very Fame of ours is about that design, which if others would be persuaded to follow, it must be looked on as a considerable Reformation.

For surely, My Lord, if Preachers *faithfully and prudently* discharge their province, and *preach de tempore*; such a Course of Sermons will preach up the Church of *England* as much as some Lectures have preached it down: Nor can there be any better expedient to prevent ill effects of that Liberty, which has been taken by Preachers in the choice of Subjects, and preaching as well as praying, according to their own Fancies and Humors: A thing diametrically opposite to the design of the Church, and which I shall (as in Duty bound) always oppose within the Circuit of my Jurisdiction.

I am not willing to give your Lordship further trouble, but I dare not slip this fair occasion to declare to the World, That I think my self obliged to your Lordship in an extraordinary manner for fundry noble Favours and Acts of great Goodness towards me, especially since my late undeserved Promotion, among which none make such deep Impression on my Soul as your present Concurrency and Countenance in the discharge of my Offices, and honest Zeal for the House and Service of God.

Begging the Continuance of your Lordships Kindness (which I shall do all that in me lies to secure) together with your Benediction on my Person and Endeavours, I do subscribe my self with great Sincerity and Respect,

My Lord,

Your Lordships most Humble and most

Faithful Servant,

D. G.

T O

TO THE
INHABITANTS
OF THE
City of Durham.

B*T*he fulness of the Assemblies which have been in our Cathedral at our Wednesday and Friday Sermons, lately Re-established, during Advent and Lent; it is Evident that such a course of Preaching is not only a very reasonable and well-advised Determination of our Diöcesan, but that the Attendance thereon is a thing very Practicable and Suitable to the temper of the Place and People.

The observation of which, hath put me upon the Resolution of Printing what I Preach'd to you on the first Wednesday in Advent, that your good Affection to Primitive Order, and forwardness to submit to the directions of your Superiors, might meet with that Justice which is due to so commendable an Example, and might be improved to excite others to the imitation of it. And that those Arguments which were used with good success to such of you, as were present, being brought to the Eye of those that were lawfully, and necessarily absent, might Contribute to the fixing of all Persons in their future respects, to so Edifying a Practice; and prevail with you all, when ever your Affairs will permit,

to repair to the Church; as the Magistrates and chief People of the Town have with good appearance of Devotion already done. And I cannot believe, that a Duty, that carries with it such substantial Reasons, and is backt moreover with such sufficient Precedents will ever be either neglected or opposed by any that mean honestly, after it is once brought to your consideration, in such a manner as I have here endeavour'd.

What I aim at farther, is to engage you to Embrace the Weekly Opportunities of Practising in a Devout Reception of the Holy Sacrament, that Christian Knowledge, wherein you are now more frequently Instructed; and in the most solemn manner, at the two great Festivals of Christmas and Easter, to the more Holy Observation of which, this extraordinary frequency of Sermons is designed as Preparation. Such Young People especially, as never before have Received the Holy Communion, ought I conceive to chuse one of these times, as most proper for their first approaches thereto, by reason of these means of Instruction and Devotion, which always ought, and now do preceed them.

I am apt in charity to believe that your Affection to these seasons thus reviv'd, was occasion'd by your most steadfast resolutions for Weekly Communion, and Daily Prayers. And I have no less ground to hope that on the other hand, the Religious Observation of these opportunities of Grace and Piety offer'd us, will encrease Peoples Affection for frequent Communion, as well as dispose them with such real profit, and advantage to Communicate, that the benefit of a Weekly Sacrament may be conspicuous in the Lives and Conversations of the People of this City. And that will not only silence all those who presume to open their Mouths against so Christian, and necessary a Duty; but also effectually convince them of their sin, in opposing a clear Ordinance, and the last Command of their Dying Saviour, that they may become perfect

perfect Proselytes, and make amends by their future example, and fervent Zeal for the injury they have done to Virtue and Religion, by hindring the most Efficacious means that ever were Instituted, for the begetting and encreasing both of the one and the other.

The Consideration of this I recommend to the thoughts of such as believe that, which to me has ever been the greatest of Paradoxes, namely, That obedience to an expresse command of our Saviour in the frequent Commemoration of his Death, the greatest Respect that we can pay to the Holy Sacrament should be a means of bringing it into contempt. A mighty unaccountable conceit, which I cannot but admire, should ever enter (as I find it often does) into the Heads of Men, otherwise of parts and understanding; but surely, this fancy is no Evidence of their Parts, more than of their Devotion.

And I do as seriously recommend to the consideration of all such as do often Participate of Christs Body and Blood, the necessity of approaching there with due Care, Reverence, and Devotion; and their obligation to live so exemplarily and suitably to so great an Honour and Priviledg, as may remove these Stumbling-Blocks which have been by prophane or careless Christians laid in the way of Men, who have sometimes perhaps without ill meaning, not only talk'd, but writ; and sometimes possibly Preach'd against frequent Communion, to their own Discredit, as well as Dishonour to the Sacrament.

The chief reason of this distinct and particular Address to you the Citizens and Inhabitants living nigh the Cathedral, is because it was not possible for me, in the compass of the time allotted for my Discourse in the Pulpit, to comprehend all those things that were requisite to be touch'd on, at the restoring so Antient a Custom, after so long a Revolution of time.

And

And for the ensuing Discourse, the plainness and familiarity of it, will I hope, evince that there was no other intent in committing it to the Press, but only to do good to such Readers, as that Method and Stile is most proper and suitable to. And for the sake of that honest design of promoting your Spiritual welfare, I hope you will pardon the Prolixity of both; and kindly accept of the Christian intentions and pains I have taken in this, or any other part of my Ministerial Office of late, or heretofore.

I shall lay before you at present, no more Arguments to convince you how great your Obligation is to continue your Diligence, in repairing to Service and Sermon on the appointed days; and I wish I could live to have the like occasion to praise you for increasing that diligence in your attendance upon the Sacrament, in your proper persons when you have no just impediment, and taking care that there may be some Representative of your Family when you have; contenting my self with the honest motives which I have already used, and leaving the further success to God.

A
SERMON
PREACHED
IN THE
CATHEDRAL CHURCH
OF
DURHAM,
ON
DECEMBER the 2d. 1685.
Being the first Wednesday in Advent.

ROM. XIII. II.
*And that knowing the time, &c. unto the end
of the, &c.*

THE late Restauration of the weekly Sacrament, in this and other Cathedrals, may very well be attended on, by the present Religious and laudable Custom which we are now reviving, *i. e.* Sermons twice a Week (on *Wednesdays* and *Fridays*) during *Advent* and *Lent*: That the Instruction from the

B

Pulpit

A Sermon Preached in the

Pulpit may be proportionable to the Devotion of those Seasons, which ought among all good Christians to be extraordinary; they being peculiarly destined by the Church to works of Piety, and very particularly to the exercises of Repentance, to dispose and fit us for the due Celebration of those great and high Festivities, our Saviours Birth and Resurrection; which our Holy Mother does warn us not to rush on, with so little care, as we do on ordinary Festivals, by assigning to the one Four, and to the other no less than Six weeks preparation.

An holy practice, which was in use in this very Cathedral, and, it is not difficult to prove, in many others before the Rebellion of Forty one, and hath been observed in the Metropolitcal Church of York, ever since the Restoration.

If all Religious and Commendable Customs, which the Church did once enjoy, and still wishes for, were not immediatly restored after so dismal a time of Violence, Sacrilege and Confusion, it ought to be no great matter of Admiration.

It may rather afford some cause of wonder, that for the first Twenty years there should be made any Progress at all towards restoring such good Customs, whereof some men could hardly endure the very name. 'Twas well that we could be permitted at first to enjoy a *Christ-mas* without an *Advent*, and an *Easter* without a *Lent*, the Holy Festivals themselves, without the seasons allotted for preparation. When the Holy Sacrament had not been administered in most places for Fifteen years together, it ought to be esteemed a mighty matter to have it Administred once a Month in a Cathedral. And when the generality had expunged out of their Calendar, the very titles of our highest Festivals, and trained up their Children in that evil way, it could not but be difficult to per-

perswade people to embrace any thing that related unto them.

But Blessed be the name of the Eternal God, these two or three last years have not only produced an advantageous Revolution for all Christendome, which should fill all the Churches thereof with *Te Deums*, but particularly for our own Church and Kingdom, by frustrating those fears and jealousies, which had almost intoxicated the Nation, and did occasion that terrible Rebellion which nothing less than the goodness of God, and Conduct of such a Prince could so happily have suppressed; nay, by raising in some Respects our established Government and Religion, when some apprehended we should have lost both.

Inasmuch that I'll make bold to say, and deliver my Conscience, It is like to be the fault of the People rather than the Prince, if both do not flourish more than they have done in former Ages.

For if God gives us the Grace, according to the liberty granted us by an Indulgent Sovereign, to live up to the height of our establish'd Religion, in such sort, that it may once appear with due Lustre; Priests becoming generally Exemplary for Holiness, and diligent in their Office, by keeping close to the Rules of the *Common Prayer Book*, and above all, laying out their endeavours in training up the young generation in such sound Principles of Loyalty and Religion, as to give (at last) an infallible demonstration, That an exact obedience to our Mother, is the surest and most expeditious course to produce the best Christians, and best Subjects; we may be (by Gods Blessing) fixed on so sure a foundation, as that none of our Adversaries on either hand will be able either to undermine or overthrow us.

A Sermon Preached in the

A Digression, but very necessary to obviate that *Hereditary* Disease of the People of *England* (which God deliver us from) an *aptitude* not only to entertain, but to *augment Fears and Jealousies*, and to Torment themselves, and disturb the World with them, when they have little, and sometimes *no Cause* at all, as much as when they have a great One.

Our two most Reverend Metropolitans, and other Fathers of the Church, as well as our own Right Reverend Diocesan, seem to have well considered the bettering of our Circumstances, by obliging us not only to more *frequent Communion*, but putting us in a way to communicate, especially at the two great Festivals before mentioned, with greater Profit, more Devotion, through Examination and due Preparation.

To all which pious Christian ends and purposes, a *Course of Sermons in Lent and Advent*, prudently contrived, according to the Religious Example of our Forefathers, and Commands of Authority at present, may in all probability so much contribute, that I fear those will deserve much Blame, who shall not heartily concur with so Edifying a design and imployment. But the number of those will be, I trust, very few, if any at all; for as the Members of our Cathedral have readily complied with our Bishops motion: so it is hoped that the People of the several Parishes of this City, will as willingly comply with ours, namely, to come themselves, when their Callings and necessary Affairs will give them leave; or else to send some, one at least of their Families, to partake of this Christian and well designed method of Devotion and Instruction, whereunto I do in the Name of God invite them by this honest and well meant Address, preparatory to the Subject I have chosen to discourse on, which is part of one of the

Scriptures

Scriptures proper to the Season, and which I now come to handle.

It is, you see, the burden of the Peoples Prayers to God, as well as of the Churches Advice to the Congregation, *To cast away the works of Darkness, and to put on the armour of Light*, which is also implied in the words of my Text; whereby we are Exhorted to *arise from sleep*, on consideration of the unseasonableness and unsuitableness of a drowsie stupid Condition, in respect both of our State and Duty. *Our Salvation is nearer than when we believed; the night is far spent, the day is at hand.*

Two things we may take notice of in the verse. An *Exhortation*, and the *Reason of that Exhortation*. The Exhortation is, *To arise from Sleep*. The Reason or Ground from whence this Exhortation is drawn, is the season or opportunity; *Seeing our Salvation is nearer than when we believed.*

In handling these words, I shall make the last in my Text, the first in my Discourse, and begin with the Season or Opportunity.

You see plainly this Exhortation [*To arise from Sleep*] to be a necessary Consequent from the Antecedent Proposition, [*Our Salvation is nearer than when we believed.*] And when this is proved, we must not deny the Conclusion, but rise from Sleep. And that considering the Season, it is high time so to do. I begin with the first Proposition, *Our Salvation, &c.* and here we must

1. Enquire of the true meaning of the Words.
2. How it avails to bring in the Conclusion.

Some Commentators expound the Word, *Nearer*, in the *Gorbans* Text, by being *more due to us*; *Our Salvation is nearer*,
i. e.

i. e. more due to us for our good Works, than when we first believed, having no good Works.

Which is thus far true, That whosoever believeth in the Merits of our Saviour Jesus Christ, and justifieth this his *Faith* by a holy Life, Salvation is nearer him than when he first believed; he draws nearer and nearer to God, by Works of Religion and Charity, with Sincerity performed; But that still not by way of Debt, good Works being an Antecedent of our Salvation, but not the Cause.

Cornel. a
Lapid.
Erasm:

Others make this Speech of St. *Paul* to be relative between the times of the Law and the Gospel: *Our Salvation* is nearer since Christ's Coming than before; For before, they were in the Night of Ignorance, under the dark Cloud of Ceremonies, which the bright Morning-Star Christ Jesus dispell'd at his Rising; Abolishing all the Pharisaical Traditions, purging Judaical Errors, and freeing them from their sins. And this Opinion in it self carries a Truth, but not the whole Truth.

There being a Threefold Coming of our Saviour into the World.

1. To Suffer.

2. To Convert.

3. To Judge.

By every one of which he may be said to be nearer us.

By the First, when he came into the World to take our Nature upon him, that he might be capable to suffer for us, he may be said to be nearer us, because he was manifested more plainly, and made himself more sensibly known unto us: And to this Coming this latter Opinion has Relation.

And

And this is the Coming which we have in our eye, and for which we are preparing: And as our Right Honourable and Reverend Diocelan hath provided that this *Advent* shall be the most Religious *Advent* that hath been kept in this Church these Five and Forty Years; I shall take care, by Gods Assistance, as much as in me lies, (and I desire you all in Gods Name to join with me herein), that the approaching Feasts may be the most Holy *Christmas*.

Our Saviour's Second Coming is, when out of his Mercy he descends to any particular Soul, to turn him from his evil ways, and to regenerate him by the Spirit to a new Life: And by this also he may be said to be nearer unto us. For an Infidel is far from God, and so from Salvation: The first Act of his Conversion is his first Step towards God; and his progress in a good Life, is his direct Journey to Heaven. And to this the former Opinion is most properly applicable.

But there is also a Third Coming of our Saviour, *i.e.* To Judgment. According to which St. *Chrysostom* and the Fathers do for the most part interpret these Words. There is a last great Judgment at the end of the World, of which we know neither the Day nor the Hour, yet indefinitely, that it approaches we all know and believe, and should often consider: And there is also a particular Judgment which every soul receives before it enters Heavens Gates. And good Proficients in the works of Piety and Charity, as they approach every day nearer and nearer to the end of this Life; so also to the beginning of that Life, in which they shall receive their Reward, through the Mercy of Christ, according to their Works, that is, Eternal Happiness.

And of this, this Text is especially to be understood; which our Apostle uses as an Argument to incite and stir

stir up the *Romans* to Works of Charity and Godliness The validity of which Argument, how it prevaileth to conclude the forsaking of sin, or our own arising from sleep, I shall briefly show you in the next Place.

Our End, our time of Dissolution, is nearer than when we believed, Therefore it is high time to arise from sleep.

Were it not dastardly Cowardice for a Soldier after a long Fight, to give over and yield at the last Battel, well promoted on with hope of Victory ? So it is vile cowardice in a Christian Soldier to lose the Victory, only by not fighting, being urged to it with an assurance of Conquest.

The carnal Soldiers fight but in hope, but the spiritual in Faith and Confidence : Man seldom conquers his Enemies but by Death or Wounds ; but a Christian repels Satan only by resisting him, *Resist the Devil, and he will flye from thee*, saith St. James.

If therefore the assurance of Victory cannot raise his Spirit to Battel, methinks the easiness of the Combat should encourage him ; and if none of these can move him, the Crown that is set before him, must needs draw him on.

Will any refuse Gold, refuse a Crown ? Behold ye *Romans*, (might St. Paul have said) the happiness of your Estate ; your Battel is almost finished ; your Victory is certain ; your Crown ready to be set upon your Head ; *Turpissimum in extremo Actu desicere* ; it is base to fail in the last Act. Arise therefore in the Name of God, arise from sleep, forsake your sins, for your Salvation is nearer than when you believed.

There is no man having a Temporal Estate to fall to him after the expiration of some Years, but does more and more rejoyce in it, when he comes nearer to the Possession

Cathedral Church of Durham.

session of it; and should we not do thus much for our eternal Salvation? Behold the date of this Life is almost expired, with many if not most of us, and we are not probably, if we consider the course of Nature, far from that dreadful Moment, &c. It does behove us to arise therefore from sleep, to awaken and lift up our eyes towards Heaven, where there is a better Inheritance of Eternal Bliss prepared by Christ Jesus for all those that diligently wait for him.

Our Life is a Race and Course from Earth to Heaven; it were double shame for him that runneth, to sit down when he sees the Stage: No Traveller will faint when he sees the City before him; and shall we lye drowzing in our sins, when we see Heaven-Gates open before us, ready to receive us all that strive to enter? No, no; let us arise then, if it be but for mere shame, and suffer not the just Rebuke of the *Galatians* to fall upon us; You began well, but why did you not go on? Who hindered you? It is the end that shall be rewarded; he and only he that continueth to the end, shall be saved. The Philosopher observes, that those Motions which are swiftest in the beginning, and slow towards the end, are violent Motions from some Terrene extrinsical Principle; but voluntary Motions begin slowly, and grow more strong still towards the end, having their cause within them. And such must a Christians Progress be, not forced but free, still pressing forward to the Mark; the nearer to the Mark, the more care in his course.

And now we that are every day nearer the mark, should be sure to mend our pace; for we know the season, our end, our time may be sudden, and we may the very next moment be called to an Account for our sins. Shall we then not *watch and pray*, &c. a good

season: Who knows whether he may live to see the next day, the next hour, the next moment? and if we neglect the first opportunity, God alone knows whether he may ever grant us a second: Those of this City I am sure ought to be alarm'd in a particular manner upon this Account; it hath pleased God to visit many this last Year past, with sudden death, and cut off many persons, some in the midst of their days; God grant it may not be the fate of sundry others to be so cut off, and in the midst of their sins.

The most certain way to prevent such fears, is to follow this days advice, namely, To arise and look about us; which if we do, we shall soon find it is high Noon, high Time to awake out of our sleep, and set about our work; for every one of us, I fear the best, slumbers, if not sleeps; the night will shortly come wherein no man shall work, as we are told in the Gospel. There cannot be therefore a greater Act of Wisdom, than to follow our Saviours Advice in due season, and *walk while we have the light, lest darkness come upon us*, Joh. 12. 35. By no means neglecting the Counsel of St. Paul, to do good while we have opportunity, *Gal. 6. 10.* Seeing our Salvation draweth near, let us arise from sleep, and that now considering the season, it being high time so to do: And so I come to the last Proposition, the Consequent and Conclusion drawn from the former,

[To arise from Sleep.]

Before I can shew you what that is, I must distinguish betwixt the several kinds of sleep. The first sleep, which is the sleep of nature, is sometimes taken for the sleep of Death figuratively, *1 Thes. 4. 13. I would not have you ignorant, Brethren, concerning those that are asleep, i. e. dead*: Sometimes properly, for the Ligation of the senses,

ses,

Cathedral Church of Durham.

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ses, or rest of the animal Faculties, Joh. 11. 12. *If he sleep, he shall do well.*

The 3^d. sort of sleep, the sleep of sin, is the sleep meant in the Text, and the same of which the Apostle speaks, Eph. 5. 14. *Awake thou that sleepest, and arise from the dead.* Of this sleep the Wiseman complains, Pro. 6. 9. *How long wilt thou sleep, O sluggard? when wilt thou arise out of thy sleep?* And which is the sleep which the Apostle here means, from which it is high time to arise; it is high time to arise from this sleep, *i. e.* to shake off our sins, and walk honestly as in the day (as our Apostle expresses it); *not in rioting and drunkenness, not in chambering and wantonness, not in strife and envying, but putting on the Lord Jesus Christ, and making no provision for the flesh, to fulfil the lusts thereof.*

Which manner of Proof is drawn from the Analogy and Likeness that sin hath with sleep; For as sleep inhibits all senses and other faculties of the soul from executing their several functions; the Eye from seeing, the Ear from hearing, and the Understanding from judging, the Will from wishing, and the whole Man from acting, which while we watch are employed in their several Offices:

So the spiritual Senses and Motions of our mind, Faith and Charity, are smothered in the dead-sleep of sin, and lose their very Essence and Being; for Faith cannot be without Charity, nor Charity without Operation or Working, neither is there any working in sleep.

Would any one then approve his Faith, and be accounted faithful? Let him shew me his Faith by his Works, and here take his beginning; let him first rise from sleep, *i. e.* Repent. 'Tis certain those that sleep in sin, can never do the works of Faith.

But who those are that may be most properly termed thus to sleep in sin, ought to be my next endeavour to shew you : And here, not insisting on, or particularizing the greatest and soundest sleepers, my time allotted will not permit me to reach them; viz. *Heathens, Jews, Atheists, Hereticks* (and *Schismatics*) who may be truly said to sleep in *utramque aurem*, soundly without the least interruption, their whole Life indeed being but one intire act of sleep; I shall rather enquire within the Church among Professors of our own Religion, for some of those sleepers my Text aims at, where it is notorious we may find too great a number, who can thus sleep, even at Noon-day, resist the force of the Gospel, the most powerful methods to reduce sinners; nay, become daily worse men, more and more vile, lewd and stupid, to the reproach of Christianity, in the very midst of the Glorious Light of the most purely Reformed Church in the whole World in point of Doctrine, Discipline, and Worship.

'Tis certain every unregenerate Man, every impenitent Sinner, whosoever is under the power of any Lust of Flesh or Spirit, every one that is not awakened into so serious a sense of his Duty, as sincerely and faithfully to oppose sin, and to pursue virtue, faithfully using the means which God affords him to mortify his corrupt Nature (whereof a devout respect to this season of *Advent*, may be an especial one) and to revive and strengthen Grace in his Soul, is I say such a Sleeper, a sound sleeper in sin and security, even upon the very brink of Destruction; a Sleeper that ought to be awakened and warned of his danger. And if nothing else will do it, I beseech God to rouse him up by the Thunder of his Spirit, and to drag him to repentance by the terrors of his Judgments,

if

if he will by no means be drawn by the Cords of his Love.

And here I must more particularly apply my self to such a sinner, by considering him under a double capacity, either as an old hardned sinner, or a young Proficient in vice; as one that hath been from his youth to the hoary head habituated to a course of Sin and Impiety, or else as one that is newly entred into those ways that lead to the Chambers of Death, and ready to sacrifice to the Devil the very prime and flower of his youth.

And here the old Man is first obliged to awake from sleep, and rouse himself up out of his Impenitency. He who has one foot already in the Grave, should greedily catch at so fair an occasion, and lay hold on that eternal Life, which is yet, notwithstanding all his past provocations, graciously offered him: And faithfully and wisely employ and improve these few last minutes in Devotion and the exercises of Repentance, remembering that he is just ready to launch forth into the Ocean of Eternity.

And that upon the right use of the last Hours, his everlasting happiness doth depend; and that that one hour spent as it ought (here in this World) may secure that for him which hereafter he cannot do unto all Eternity.

As the Tree falls (let us seasonably consider) *so it lies.* And, *The Grave* (which is in a manner ready open to receive the old Man) *is no place for Repentance.* The hoary Head, which is a Crown of Glory, when it is found in the way of Righteousness (and a mighty Aggravation of sin when it is met with in the way of vice) ought to be a serious Monitor, and doth loudly call upon
old

A Sermon Preached in the

old men to Repent. Let them remember that they must repent now or never; their youth, their middle Age is gone, and their last days only remain, which it infinitely concerns them to manage well, having spent the rest, or else they must perish in sin and wickedness, and their Ruin will be inevitable. As they have been laden with sin and iniquity in this life, let them assure themselves, that without a speedy and hearty Conversion unto God, they will in the other World be certainly laden with punishment. Let them above others take care how they sleep any longer, lest they awake no more. If they resist this present Call, their Ears may never hear another. Death (they may assure themselves) how far soever the young man puts the evil days from him, is near them, even at the very door, and so is Judgement likewise, both which ought to strike them with all their Terrors. If this does not suffice to awaken the old man, dead in Trespases and Sins, I shall only mind him, That he above all others ought to have the sound of the last Trump always in his Ears, *furgite mortui*, arise ye dead.

The young man in the heat of his youth, and the midst of all his extravagance, has sundry and great obligations to improve this season to reform his Life, and enter into the ways of Wisdom, which, as the Wise Man tells us, are ways of pleasantness, and paths of peace. As the old Man must dye, so let me be his Monitor, That he may dye, and be hurried away to Hell in the midst of his sins: many sad and lamentable examples whereof God sets daily before our eyes.

Let the young man know, that tho' he rejoice in his youth, and his heart cheer him in the days of his youth, and he walk in the ways of his heart, and in the sight of his eyes;

eyes ; that for all these things God will bring him into Judgment. As the Taper of an old Man is expiring by the course of Nature, so is that of the young man as liable violently to be puffed out. As the one vanisheth, so is the other often driven off the Stage of this World. And the number of those that are suddenly snatched away in the midst of their heady and unadvised Courses, do far exceed those who finish their Course, and arrive to the usual Age of Man ; to *David's* Threescore years and Ten.

Besides these and many more discouragements to be wicked, common to youth in the Age of Giddiness and Sin, while their natural Lusts and Corruptions are predominant, There are as many and great Invitations to Goodness and Vertue, and *to remember their Creator in the days of their youth.* Nothing doth so indear us to God, as early Piety. As there is nothing more offensive to him (and more preposterous in it self) than to spend the Candle of our youth (our Health and Strength) in the Service of the Devil, and to put at last the very Snuff upon Gods Altar. *St. John* attained the Name of the Beloved Disciple, and had the Honour to lean in the very Bosom of his Saviour, because he gave to God the first-fruits of his strength and younger years ; and dedicated to his Redeemer the faculties of his Soul, as well as the Members of his Body, while they were untainted and undefiled by sin. No worse Reception might the youth of this or any Age have with the Saviour of the World, the Fountain of all Goodness, the Author of all Blessings, if they would but seasonably break off from the Chains of their Corrupt Nature and youthful Lusts (the very bands of Satan, and original of all their Misery) and devote themselves to his Service, which is perfect;

perfect freedom here in this Life, and whose enjoyment in the Life to come is accompanied with fulness of Joy, and Pleasures for evermore.

Having dispatch'd what I propounded to discourse on, give me leave a little farther to improve what I have said, by applying the same more particularly to our new-begun undertaking; which faithfully perform'd by the Preachers, and gladly embraced by the People, may prove much to the Honour of God, and their own Edification: by restoring the decay'd Devotion of these Holy Seasons, and the lost Reputation of our greatest Festivals: Which are not rais'd to their just Credit and Esteem, 'till we judg them well deserving, and worthy of what the Church designs them, namely, of a preceeding time of Preparation.

'Tis probable that the contempt of *Lent* carried away the greatest part of the Devotion of *Easter*; and the non-observance of the present season call'd *Advent*, occasion'd much of the Extravagancy (and Debauchery I fear sometimes) of *Christmas*.

If we are firm Friends to the Church, let us be hearty Lovers of its Festivals; (the best and most forcible Witnesses of Ancient Truth) And if we are indeed hearty Lovers of its Festivals, let us not be Enemies to those Means and Methods which the Church judgeth helpful to the due observation of them.

The Seasons of *Advent* and *Lent* (as well as the days of *Christmas*) have a choice Collect or Prayer added to their Ordinary Devotions; a particular mark of Respect, more than you will find, upon Examination, paid to any other Season of the year: And which ought to be very Admonitory and Instructive to us all.

It is, surely, commendable in all Christian people to endeavour (as well as they are able) to keep pace with their Mother the Church; and consequently when the Church encreases her Devotions in Publick, (as she doth at this Instant) for her Children to enlarge their private and more particular Exercises in the Closet: And when both do thus Religiously exceed, it is very accountable in Ministers to add to their Labours, (as we do at this time) by quickening People to the diligent Discharge of the present duties incumbent on them; and instructing them, in the right manner, how to perform them to their Spiritual Advantage.

It must be confessed, That there has been a lamentable abuse even of Sermons; and the multiplicity of them (as the matter has been ordered) hath in some sort prov'd a grievance; (for some have been set up purposely to fight against the Church.) As the Pulpit has been used oftentimes (possibly to this very day) to insinuate Sedition, and Disaffection to our Governours and Government: So has it been, God knows, (and we know by sad experience) oftentimes mischievously employ'd even to sound out Rebellion: Insomuch that a right Regulation of the Pulpit, in such sort that it may neither jostle with the Altar, nor jostle out the best sort of Preaching, Catechizing, and Instructing of the Youth and Ignorant, hath long been, and still is a very desirable Felicity, and such as in all probability might much tend to our Establishment and Growth in Loyalty and Religion.

But there is no ground of fear (Brethren) that such a manner of Preaching as the Church of *England* allows of, and exhorts to, (whose very *Characteristick* is Loyalty and Allegiance) can be any ways injurious to

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Christian Duty. And that Preaching in *Advent* (to prepare People for the Christian and Holy Observation of *Christmas*), and throughout the Season of *Lent* (to dispose for the devout and affectionate Celebration of the Feast of our Lords Resurrection) hath been approved of, all along from the Reformation in our own Church, as well as by the Ancient Church and Christians, is very easie to demonstrate.

Tho possibly at this present time we may not be able to discover many Cathedrals which retain this Ancient Religious Practice ; yet it is more than probable, if we look back no farther than the devout Days of our Religious Prince King *Edward* the Sixth, whilst the Flame of that Apostolick Zeal, which happily delivered us out of a miserable State of deplorable Darknes and Ignorance, was in being, and reign'd in the Breasts of a sufficient Number of devout People, to make daily Communion, the practice of that Age, necessary, not only in Cathedrals, but in sundry other places ; we shall scarce find any Cathedral, or considerable Church that wanted them ; which we may the more easily be induced to believe, since our two Metropolitall Churches had them home to our *Great Rebellion*, that swept away all sound and truly Orthodox Sermons, Services, and Sacraments, and the Clergy and Revenue with them.

'Tis not very likely that the Church of *England* (which was never agitated by a spirit of Opposition and Contradiction, nor ever rejected good things, merely because the Papists practised them) would wholly reject this wholsom and edifying Course, that had so great Footsteps in Antiquity, and which carried with it so high a Respect to our Saviours Coming into the World, and Rising from the Dead, (two special Works of our Re-

Redemption), which constitute the Foundation Articles of our Christianity; and not honour the Time of *Advent*, no nor so much as *Lent*, with Preaching twice a Week; which in the times of *St. Augustine* and others, enjoy'd Sermons as well as Sacraments daily.

A Practice so Ancient and Justifiable, That neither the *Romanists* at home, * (before they forced us from them) or others abroad in other Nations since, ever dared let fall to the Ground, more than they do the daily Celebration of a pretended Sacrament (tho it hath nothing of the Nature, carrying with it all the Contradictions imaginable, to Reason and the Holy Scripture) lest they might not appear what they highly (but falsely) pretend to be, *viz.* strict Observers of Antiquity.

A Practice (we may be sure) in it self so Reasonable and Pious, That had it not been the Practice of our own Cathedral (as some alive can Witness, and we need go no farther than the Members of our own Body for Testimony) it would have been very commendable and desirable to have made it so; That this Holy Season, called *Advent*, (which is to *Christmas*, in some respects, as *Lent* is to *Easter*) may want no Help, Opportunity or Invitation, for the Exercise of all that Devotion which can be justly desired by a devout Soul; And which the Church supposeth, and hints to us in her particular choice of Prayers, and Scriptures, home to *Christmas* from *Advent Sunday*.

Advent Sunday is the beginning of our Ecclesiastick Year, or our Churches Course of Services; and the Church measures her seasons by the Motion of her Saviour, rather than that of the Sun; for you will find if you examine your *Common Prayer Books*, by the Order of the Collects, Epistles, and Gospels, that *Advent Sun-*

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day is rank'd there, as the First Sunday, and the Feast of St. *Andrew* (which happens always near *Advent* Sunday, and sometimes falls on it), as the first Festival in the Year. Which among other matters may at this instant be an Incentive to Devotion. Whoever desires to end well in any Enterprize, should make it his Business to begin well.

The very season you see, does even in this respect also very particularly Invite us to be Devout.

What kind of Devotions (to conclude) are most incumbent on us, at this time, and most proper for the Exercise of a Christian, you may best Learn now, as at all other times, from the Choice and Order of the Church. In the Sunday Services you have set forth unto you the several comings of our Saviour Christ; his coming in the Flesh; his coming in the Spirit; his coming in the Ministry; and his coming to Judgment: Let some of those employ your thoughts, and be the Subject of your Meditations, more or less, at least on the Sundays.

The Epistle for Advent Sunday, which gives us our first Alarm (and out of which I have for the same reason chosen my Text), together with our admirable Collect peculiarly added to the Devotions of the whole season [*Almighty God give us Grace to cast away the Works of Darkeness, &c.*] do invite us to the strict Exercise of Repentance, to labour to mortify our Corrupt Lusts; and to exercise (as much as in us lies) Christian Grace and Vertue.

And let this be your Endeavour all the Week after; at least, upon these two Days, which by our New Order, are design'd for Sermons, and which have always been esteem'd the most proper Days of the Week for Penitential Exercises: The last of which (*i. e. Fryday*),

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is reckon'd up among the Fasting-days of the Church ; and so commanded to be throughout the whole Year, (unless it fall on *Christmas-Day*). And if the former (*i. e. Wednesday*) be made so likewise for the future (as Devout Christians have often made it), it will be a very Laudable Practice, and suitable to our present design and undertaking.

And it will moreover give Devout Souls a fair occasion to Sympathize with the poor Persecuted Reformed Christians of the Kingdom of *France*, whose sad condition I conceive we ought in especial manner to Recommend to God in our Prayers; a Tribute we owe to their Misery, whilst they are labouring under so Barbarous a Persecution.

Whosoever is fully bent to Exercise this Duty in the most effectual manner, and heartily desires to improve all occasions, and means to advance on in Repentance in general ; needs not be importuned to apply himself to Fasting : Since as it gains time for the exercise of Repentance, so it always disposeth for the more spiritual performance of the Duty.

The Church does not Impose upon us throughout *Advent*, (as it does throughout *Lent*), the duty of Fasting and Abstinence, (for which to some (it is like) it will be the more grateful ;) for the Devotions of *Advent* are, I conceive, rather of a mixt nature ; partly Eucharistical, and partly Penitential. But if any Devout and well-disposed Christian (who shall find it Commodious for his Soul) will employ his Exercises of Repentance and Prayer with Fasting, and as a Freewil-Offering to his Saviour (for the Memory of whose coming in the Flesh, we are all making Preparation), voluntarily add one day every Week to this Commendable Religious Duty, more than

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than the Church Imposes on us; and not only Repent; but Fast and Pray Devoutly in the private Closet, to increase his Penitence; as well as attend to a Sermon here in the Publick Church, [on all these Days which are now singled out by Authority, for Days of more than ordinary Assemblies] it will be no mighty work of Supererogation, and a fit preparation for the Approaching Festivals. The Joy whereof will be increased, and rendred more grateful by some preceding Godly Sorrow, which is inseparable from the Genuine Exercise of that true Repentance which we daily pray that we may exercise, in our incomparable Collect proper for the Season: which will serve as an excellent pattern, whereby we may Regulate our Devotions; and wherewith I shall conclude my Sermon:

Almighty God, Give us Grace that we may cast away the works of Darknes, and put upon us the Armour of Light, now in the Time, &c.

FINIS.

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